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REPORT

COUNTRY USSR

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SUBJECT Wages, Goods, and Services in Shakhty

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THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

Wages differed from town to town in central Russia, not to mention their variance between whole areas, as for example between the Maritime Provinces and the northern regions of the USSR where special wage scales were prescribed. Differences in living costs and manpower demand between localities accounted for these corresponding wage differences.

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a semi-skilled lathe operator in Leningrad was making more money than a miner in Shakhty.

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the Moldavian SSR, wages paid there were even lower than in Shakhty. Of course, the cost of living in the Moldavian SSR at that time was considerably lower than in the USSR proper.

2. During the period 1949-1951 wages of workers throughout the USSR remained officially static; on paper, they were not cut or increased. In actual fact, they were considerably cut down in the following way: simultaneously with every price reduction in the USSR, of which there were five throughout the postwar period, the work norms of all workers

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were increased.

[redacted] the workers gained nothing from the price reductions, although these were always announced by the government as new benefits for the working masses. The only people who actually benefited from price reductions were those government employees who worked for fixed monthly salaries to which the piece rate wage scale was not applicable. 25X1

3. The average monthly wage of an unskilled worker in Shakhty during the period 1949-1951 was approximately 500 rubles. A skilled worker (except for the miners, who were paid higher wages) made an average of 700 rubles. Workers employed in heavy industrial enterprises and mines received work clothes and shoes free. These work suits were to last 12 months; if a worker wore his out before the end of this period, he had to pay for a new one from his wage. Another non-wage benefit to workers both during World War II and in the first postwar years were Worker's Supply Sections (Otdel Rabochego Snabzheniya -- ORS) organized in almost every enterprise to supply workers and their families with consumer goods and foodstuffs at reduced prices. With the stabilization of production and of supply and demand conditions in the Soviet economy after World War II, these ORS's lost much of their importance and were eventually abolished in many enterprises. Of late, the ORS had ceased to be any boon to workers. Medical care too, since it was free for every Soviet citizen, was no special benefit of the workers.
4. The non-interest loan up to 10,000 rubles granted by the State Bank to individual workers for financing construction of private houses could also be classed as a non-wage benefit. These loans were to be repaid to the Bank over seven years in monthly installments taken out of one's wages. The difficulties, however, in obtaining such a loan were so great, that this non-wage benefit was of more propaganda value to the regime than practical value to the worker. [redacted] only one miner in Shakhty who succeeded in obtaining such a loan. [redacted] 25X1

5. Because of the low living standards and minimal purchasing powers of the USSR population, it is most difficult to say what monthly income a Soviet worker would consider sufficient to support his needs adequately. [redacted]

[redacted] an equivalent of 3,000 rubles monthly would have taken care of all a worker's basic needs pretty well. At this salary he could have a decent furnished room, three meals daily, and sufficient clothing to dress properly. This being the case, it would not be hard to imagine the living standard of a worker who made 400 to 450 rubles monthly, which is a salary many were not able to exceed. 25X1

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6. In trying to keep themselves alive on their extremely low income, workers in the USSR were usually engaged in some kind of semi-illegal or illegal activity in their off-duty hours by which to make some additional money. Skilled workers worked at home manufacturing hardware; construction workers worked on private houses; mechanics performed various repairs, etc.; some grew vegetables on their home lots and sold them on the market; some raised poultry and one or two pigs; some kept a cow and sold dairy products. Speculation with consumer goods and food was quite widespread among workers. Sugar, kitchen salt, and various groceries were bought in Shakhty and taken to the rural areas where they were sold at 50% - 100% profits. Vegetables, grain, and various handicraft articles were bought in the rural areas and sold in town, which also brought profits. Although this activity was strictly forbidden and prosecuted by militia and tax authorities, quite a number of people engaged in it, disregarding the stiff penalties which could be given if one were caught flagrante delicto.
7. Rationing of food and consumer goods in the USSR having been eliminated in the Fall of 1947, no ration cards were issued and all goods were sold openly on a first come - first served basis. 25X1
8. [REDACTED]
9. Price reductions were always given wide publication in the press and over the radio. They were always given in percentages, and it was stated in an exact way to which groups (and categories and sub-categories within each group) of goods every particular reduction was to be applied. 25X1
10. There were only two sources of consumer goods' supply for the population of Shakhty: government stores and the free market. There was a military (MVD) unit in Shakhty [REDACTED] 25X1
11. Fresh meat in Shakhty was usually sold on the free market. The supply on the market was often irregular, depending on shipments. [REDACTED] Fresh fish was often available on the market, but never frozen fish. There was quite an abundant supply of pickled fish (herring) in stores. Canned foods (meat, fish, stew, vegetables, and fruit) were available in government stores. Canned foods were four to five times more expensive than fresh foods. 25X1
12. There was one hotel in Shakhty with a first-class restaurant. [REDACTED] There were several snack bars (zakusochneya) and quite a number of workers' messes in Shakhty. For prices in these establishments, see Annex B. 25X1
13. [REDACTED]
14. [REDACTED] A haircut could be had in one of several primitive barber shops for three rubles, a shave for 2½ rubles. 25X1
15. There were several middle (10-year) schools in Shakhty, one mining technical school (gornyy tekhnikum), and a driver's school. All of these schools were State-operated. There was also a public library; 25X1

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[redacted]  
[redacted] books could be taken home for reading without charge and no deposit was required.

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16. The Red Cross and Red Crescent Society was a voluntary organization whose activity in peacetime was limited to public enlightenment on hygiene and medical care rendered to children. [redacted]

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17. [redacted]

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18. There were one theater and several movie houses in Shakhty. [redacted]  
[redacted] Movie tickets were priced from 2½ to five rubles.

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## Annexes:

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- A. Prices (in rubles) of Consumer Goods in Shakhty, Rostov Oblast, in 1951.
- B. Approximate Prices (in rubles) of Meals and Liquor (1950-1951) in Shakhty.

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## Annex A

## COST OF LIVING REFERENCE SHEET

Prices (in rubles) of Consumer Goods in Shakhty, Rostov Oblast, in 1951

<u>FOODSTUFFS</u>	<u>Government store</u>	<u>Free market</u>
Black bread, kg.	1.8	--
White bread, kg.	3.	--
Milk, liter	--	4.
Butter, kg.	40.	--
Vegetable oil, liter	25.	20.
Cheese, kg.	--	50.
Sugar, kg.	13-11.	--
Beef, second choice, kg.	25.	30.
Pork, 1st grade, kg.	30.	30-35.
Veal, 1st grade, kg.	35.	35-40.
Potatoes, kg.	2.	2.5
Rice, kg.	--	40.
White Beans, kg.	5.	6.
Apples, kg.	--	1.5
Salt, kg.	0.4	--

LUXURY FOODS

Vodka, 40 degrees, liter	50.
Wine, 85 centiliters	30.
Coffee, ground, kg.	350- 400.
Tea, 1st grade, kg.	50.

CLOTHING

Wool, medium grade, meter	250.
Cotton socks, pair	15.
Rayon stockings, good, pr.	50- 60.
Man's wool suit	1,000.
Man's leather jacket	1,200.
Leather shoes	450-500.
Felt boots for winter	250.
Handbag, artificial leather	60-70.
Man's felt hat	100-150.

MANUFACTURED PRODUCTS

Man's bicycle, 3 speeds	850-750.
Upright piano	6,000-7,000.

AUTOMOBILES

Small car (Moskvich)	8,000.
Medium car (like Ford)	16,000.
Large luxury car (copy of 1946 Packard, carriage work finished by hand)	30-40,000.

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## Annex B

Approximate Prices (in rubles) of Meals and Liquor (1950-1951) in Shakhty

	FIRST CLASS RESTAURANT	SNACK BAR	FACTORY OR ENTERPRISE MESS
Breakfast: two eggs, butter, bread, tea	6-8	5	
Dinner: Soup, second course of meat or fish with potatoes and one vegetable, dessert	15-20	10	5
Supper: Meat course with potatoes and one vegetable, dessert	10-15	8	4-4.5
150 g. of vodka	3.5	3	
Bottle of beer (500 g.)	4	3.2	
Bottle of cheap wine (750 g.)	20	15	

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